



Richmond/Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Study

Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

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Contact: Alan Tobias
(804) 786-1063

Janette Crumley
(757) 460-4183

State Seeks Input on Passenger Rail Service Between Richmond and Hampton Roads

Four Information Meetings To Be Held March 9 - 24

RICHMOND – The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) will hold a series of regional public meetings March 9, 10, 11 and 24 to gather public feedback on potential higher speed rail service between Richmond and Hampton Roads. "With growing traffic congestion in the I-64 and I-95 northeast corridors, we need to look at transportation alternatives," stated Karen J. Rae, DRPT Director. "This corridor improvement is an important link to future higher speed rail service from Atlanta to Boston."

DRPT, along with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) study to evaluate potential alternatives and the environmental impacts of higher speed rail service. It will examine transportation needs, determine possible alternative solutions within the study area, evaluate the environmental impacts of the various alternative routes and select a locally preferred alternative. Issues regarding schedule, operational and capacity constraints and ridership will also be analyzed.

Two transportation corridors will be examined in addition to any other viable solutions identified through public input:

- Richmond to Petersburg to South Hampton Roads (Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Chesapeake)
- The existing Amtrak route from Richmond to Williamsburg to Newport News

The state is seeking input from citizens, businesses and visitors to identify the significant issues – as well as opportunities for improvement – that should be included in the study. "It's really important for DRPT to know what the public thinks," said Ms. Rae. "This is a great opportunity for them to shape their transportation future."

Each meeting will begin with an overview of the study process followed by an opportunity to talk one-on-one with the Study Team. The public is invited to join the Study Team between 4PM and 7PM for an open house. Formal presentations will begin at 4:30PM and 6PM.

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City	Date/Time	Location	Address
Richmond	Tuesday, March 9, 4-7PM (Snow Date 3/23/04)	Science Museum of Virginia	2500 West Broad St., West Terrace Area Richmond, Virginia
Petersburg	Wednesday, March 10, 4-7PM (Snow Date 3/17/04)	Petersburg Union Train Station	103 River St. Petersburg, Virginia
Chesapeake	Thursday, March 11, 4-7PM (Snow Date 3/16/04)	Chesapeake Central Library	298 Cedar Rd., Room 1 Chesapeake, Virginia
Williamsburg	Wednesday, March 24, 4-7PM (Snow Date 3/31/04)	City of Williamsburg Community Building	401 North Boundary St. Williamsburg, Virginia

Those unable to attend a meeting may send their written comments to: Mr. Alan Tobias, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, P.O. Box 590, Richmond, VA 23218-0590; or by e-mail to: comments@rich2hrrail.info. The public is also encouraged to offer comment through the study's hotline at 1-877-742-4247 (statewide TDD at 711) or through the study's web site at www.rich2hrrail.info. Comments need to be received by May 15, 2004 to be included in the official record.

Following the initial input meetings in March, alternatives will be selected for detailed evaluation in the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS will be released this summer for additional public input before the final document is released this fall. The State, in consultation with the FRA, will then select the final preferred alternative that best meets the needs of the study area.

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation funds and directs improvements to the Washington to Richmond higher speed rail corridor. DRPT is also responsible for providing funding and technical assistance to 2 major and 9 shortline freight railroads, more than 40 public transit agencies, including passenger rail and commuter rail, 15 commuter assistance programs, and over 50 specialized transportation service providers in the Commonwealth.

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